

# VOE: YOUR OPINIONS DO COUNT

## USPS NEWS HARDCOPY

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## VOE: loud and clear!

We hear you. In fact, we hear you louder – and clearer – than ever. That’s what the VOE Survey is all about. It’s your opportunity to share your thoughts about how things are going where you work. And more of you than ever did just that during the last fiscal year. But it’s not about the numbers. It’s about what’s happening. Because that’s the information we need – from you – so we can work to improve things. So keep those responses coming. They’re important.

And don’t forget: each year, every career employee has the opportunity to participate in the VOE survey. Every three months, one fourth of our employees receive a survey. So, when it’s your turn, fill it out, send it back, tell us what you think. It’s confidential and you can do it on the clock.

And to everyone who made 2003 the best VOE year yet, thanks for sharing.

## More marrow donors More lives saved

This honor is yours. Through postal employee participation in the Delivering the Gift of Life Campaign, sponsored by USPS and 3M, more than 17,000 names have been added to the registry of possible marrow donors. Marrow and stem cell transplants give people with life-threatening blood diseases a second chance at life. PMG Jack Potter accepted the Zumwalt Legacy

Award from The Marrow Foundation on behalf of the men and women of the Postal Service for supporting the campaign, which makes it possible for USPS employees to join the National Marrow Donor Program registry of unrelated marrow donors.

The 2004 Gift of Life Campaign begins in November with local kick-off events in 20 districts: Atlanta, Central Illinois, Chicago, Cleveland,

Connecticut, Dallas, Detroit, Gateway, Greater Indiana, Greensboro, Houston, Louisiana, New York, Northern New Jersey, Philadelphia, Richmond, South Florida, Tennessee, Triboro and Van Nuys. Additional drives will be held next year. For more information about joining the registry, visit The Marrow Foundation website at [www.marrow.org](http://www.marrow.org).

## Hurricane heroes

Take that, Isabel. The hurricane that tore through the Mid-Atlantic region last month with its high winds, heavy rains and flooding was no match for the determination of USPS employees to deliver for their customers. The hurricane struck on a Thursday. The next day employees were cutting down trees to get to their Post Offices. Here are some of USPS’s finest in action:

■ Elizabeth City, NC, Postmaster Don Cormicle made sure his office was up and running despite having his truck destroyed and a tree fall on his garage.

■ Postmasters at Buxton, Hatteras, Frisco, Rodanthe and Avon Post Offices on Hatteras Island, NC, rode out the storm and had their offices ready to receive mail by the weekend.

■ Tyner, NC, Postmaster Willard Bond used a chainsaw to cut his way through six downed trees to get to his office.

■ Hatteras, NC, Postmaster Vivian Barnett shoveled mud and sand out of her office with the help of Clerk Dana Waterfield so customers could come in and get their mail.

■ Cary, NC, Postmaster Bobbi Sue Fretwell led a group of volunteer postmasters, supervisors and managers to do “whatever was needed” to get Outer Banks Post Offices up and running.

■ Elizabeth City, NC, Rural Carrier Pam White aided an elderly customer who hadn’t eaten in

days. White drove the customer to the nearby home of Custodian Taylor Key. The two employees picked up groceries at a local food bank for the customer.

■ Boaters at Frisco Cove Marina volunteered their boats to take the mail from Stumpy Point to Hatteras Island after Isabel washed out Highway 12, making it impossible to reach the island’s Post Offices by truck.

■ Acting Fairfax, VA, Postmaster Rick Kohne brought in a generator from home to keep the lights on at his office.

■ With power knocked out through most of the area, employees at Oakton Branch in Vienna, VA, brought in lanterns, power packs and flashlights to light their office.

■ Colonial Beach, VA, City Carrier Eddie Weston walked 10 miles a day on his route before the storm. Afterward, he walked about 15 miles a day as he dodged trees, debris and utility crews working to restore power.

■ Fredericksburg, VA, reported that 100 percent of its carriers reported the day after the storm to serve the office’s 97 routes.

■ Baltimore’s Middle River Branch employees battled power failures, flooded roads and storm surge debris to make more than 95 percent of deliveries in an area hit hard by Hurricane Isabel. Clerks and carriers sorted mail by flashlight.

Yeah. You deliver.

## Postal blue and platinum

Check your mail for a reminder about a great offer for USPS employees, especially if you’re in the market for a credit card. (Holiday shopping, anyone?) It’s the United States Postal Service Employee Platinum Visa Card. You can apply online for its introductory zero percent fixed APR for six months, no annual fee and other benefits. What could be easier? It’s just one of the ways that being postal blue means great employee deals for you. For more information, go to [www.postalemployeevisa.com](http://www.postalemployeevisa.com).

### EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

## Benefits. Changes. Choices.

It’s getting to look a lot like open season. In the next few months you’ll have opportunities to make changes to the employee benefit programs in which you currently participate — or consider something new. Here are the open seasons at a glance — look for more information in the mailings that will come to you before an open season:

■ Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) are a great way to put tax-exempt money aside for expenses such

as daycare, or braces, or co-pays for doctor’s visits. FSA open season begins Nov. 10. It ends 5 p.m. Central Time Dec. 21.

■ Also starting Nov. 10 is the Federal Employees Health Benefits open season. It runs through 5 p.m. Central Time on Dec. 9. If you’re current health plan is not working for you, this is the time to consider your options.

■ It’s never too soon to plan for retirement. A Thrift Savings Plan is a savings account for the future. Everyone can make changes to their accounts during TSP open season — Oct. 15 through 5 p.m. Central Time on Dec. 31.

■ Need extra cash after the holidays? If you’re an eligible employee, you can take advantage of the Annual Leave Exchange program during its open season, Nov. 15 through midnight Central Time Dec. 15.

Remember: Use *PostalEASE*, the automated enrollment system for benefits, during open seasons.

## Don’t know your USPS PIN?

1. Call *PostalEASE* at 1-877-4PS-EASE (1-877-477-3273).

2. Press 1 for *PostalEASE*.

3. When prompted, enter your SSN.

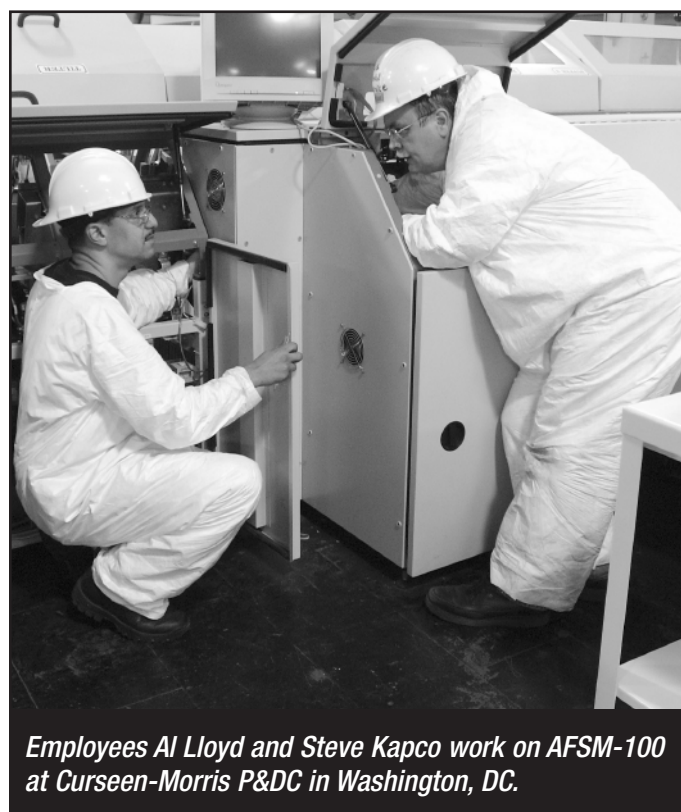
4. When prompted for your PIN, pause, then press 2.

5. Your USPS PIN will be mailed to your address of record the next business day.

## An anthrax question answered

It was two years ago, but it still seems like yesterday. A frightening first — anthrax in the mail. It turned lives upside down and, tragically, took the lives of two of our own.

We got past it, but there were concerns. There were stories. And there were questions. And the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) wanted to find the answers.



Employees Al Lloyd and Steve Kapco work on AFSM-100 at Curseen-Morris P&DC in Washington, DC.

The big question? Was mortality unusually high among workers at Washington’s Curseen-Morris P&DC in the months following the anthrax attacks? The answer? No.

CDC worked with local health departments and looked carefully at the data. Here’s what it shows:

■ The mortality rate among Curseen-Morris employees in the one-year period following the attacks was statistically similar to previous years.

■ The rates and causes of death among Brentwood workers for that period weren’t different from those during the previous five years.

■ They didn’t differ from rates for expected causes of death for the U.S. population.

CDC took the study one step further, looking at the same data for four other plants that were affected by anthrax: Morgan (New York City) P&DC; Southern Connecticut (Wallingford) P&DC; Trenton (NJ) P&DC; and South Jersey (Bellmawr) P&DC.

The findings? “No statistically significant differences were observed between death rates during the study period and those during the five years preceding the study period.”

You can read more at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5239a2.htm>.

## QUOTABLE

*“You cared about the people you rescued and the people whose hope was restored because you made a difference in their lives.”*

PMG Jack Potter recognizing NALC Heroes of the Year

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